



State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
125 WEST STATE STREET
PO Box 001
TRENTON NJ 08625-0001

JAMES E. MCGREEVEY
Governor

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CONTACT: Micah Rasmussen
PHONE: 609-777-2600

BUILDING A STRONG WORKFORCE TO BUILD A STRONG ECONOMY: GOVERNOR'S 2004 WORKFORCE SUMMIT MESSAGE

*The "New Jobs for New Jersey" summit also highlights www.njnextstop.org,
a career-guidance Website for teens.*

(NEW BRUNSWICK)—The McGreevey Administration is investing to make the latest and best training available to New Jersey workers, to ensure the Garden State's continued economic growth.

That was the message Governor James E. McGreevey brought today to "New Jobs for New Jersey: The Governor's 2004 Workforce Summit," held at Rutgers University.

Governor McGreevey led a panel of distinguished business leaders, labor leaders and educators in a discussion of the State's workforce development plans, and their role in his plan to build on New Jersey's economic successes.

After the first panel session, Dr. Carl E. Van Horn, Director of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, provided a tour of www.njnextstop.org, a Website designed to encourage teens to get excited and get started thinking about their future careers. The site helps teens consider which career path will be right for them, and helps them find the skills they'll need to get started.

The Governor and Dr. Van Horn were joined by Albert G. Kroll, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor; Caren S. Franzini, Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority; Dr. Henry Plotkin, Executive Director of the State Employment and Training Commission; Gregory Adkins, Vice President of the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission; and many leaders of New Jersey's business, labor and academic communities.

New Jersey's economy has built a strong momentum over the past year, and the State now has more than 4,012,500 jobs – the highest employment level since December 2000, the all-time record month of 4,025,300 jobs.

"This has been a year of great progress – but we can't simply be satisfied with this success. To make sure our growth continues, New Jersey must invest in its workforce," Governor McGreevey said. "We're expanding our training programs to make sure every citizen has access to the skills that will help them build a more rewarding career – and every business owner can train his or her workers, to keep their company on the cutting edge."

The Governor's workforce development plans for Fiscal Year 2005 include:

NJ STARS: New Jersey's high school students are outperforming most of their counterparts across the nation. Due to the increasing costs of college, however, not all of New Jersey's top-performing high school graduates can afford to continue their education. The Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) program will change that – and create opportunities for 9,000 students in its first year. All students who graduate in the top 20 percent of their high school class will be eligible for free tuition for two years at a New

Jersey community college. This program is part of Governor McGreevey's proposed \$113 million increase for higher education in FY 2005.

Expanding the Community College Construction and Renovation Program: New Jersey's community colleges are the backbone for the State's workforce development efforts. Last year, the colleges provided New Jersey Department of Labor-funded training for more than 50,000 workers at more than 500 companies. In his FY 2005 budget, the Governor plans to give community colleges the resources they need to do even more. That means increasing the amount the State and counties can borrow to launch capital construction projects at the colleges, to build enough classroom and lab space to train an additional 30,000 workers.

Consolidating and eliminating bureaucracy in New Jersey's workforce training programs: The State's workforce training programs fall under 27 funding sources and three State departments. Each program has its own application requirements and bureaucracy. To eliminate redundancy and make these programs available to more workers, the Governor has ordered their consolidation under a single roof. By July 1, all of these programs will be managed by the State Department of Labor, which will have a new name: The Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

One-Stop Career Centers: Governor McGreevey opened the Newark One-Stop Career Center, one of 18 to be consolidated across the State, in March. The center provides access to all services a Newark citizen needs to apply for a job, learn basic skills or learn the advanced skills needed to build an even better career. The Newark center is expected to help 20,000 city residents in its first year. Similar One-Stop Career Centers will open in Pleasantville and Jersey City in the very near future. The Newark center is also home to one of 40 Workforce Learning Link laboratories in New Jersey – facilities that provide training in math, language and computer skills. And the center will house one of 18 new Business Resource Centers. These centers, targeted at small business owners' needs, will provide facilities, assistance with hiring, and help navigating State government.

Distance learning: The Women in the 21st Century pilot project was designed to help low-income mothers upgrade their skills and increase their income. Because the participants' lives have real time constraints, the program offered classes online and let the workers build their own schedules and work at their own pace – to learn without cutting into precious family time. The program also let the women take home laptop computers free of charge. The pilot program was successful – of 138 who enrolled, 125 completed the program. The new Department of Labor and Workforce Development will expand the program in the near future.

College credit for apprenticeships: The Department of Labor and Workforce Development will develop a program to provide college credit for qualified apprenticeship programs, to recognize the experience workers gain on the job – and encourage them to continue their education. The goal is to promote learning as a lifelong pursuit.

The Community Colleges Compact: The community colleges will remain the keystone of these efforts, guided by a unique compact these colleges and the State signed in November 2003. The colleges are currently working on ways to provide even more training. Current efforts include an expansion of New Pathways to Teaching, the training program for individuals who want to change careers and become teachers; and working with the New Jersey Department of Commerce to develop the Entrepreneurship Certificate Program to help people start their own businesses.